CANADA:

ITS

RELIGIOUS PROSPECTS.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED

BEFORE

THE ENGLISH WESLEYAN CONFERENCE,

AT MANCHESTER, JULY 26th, 1871.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM MORLEY PUNSHON, M.A.

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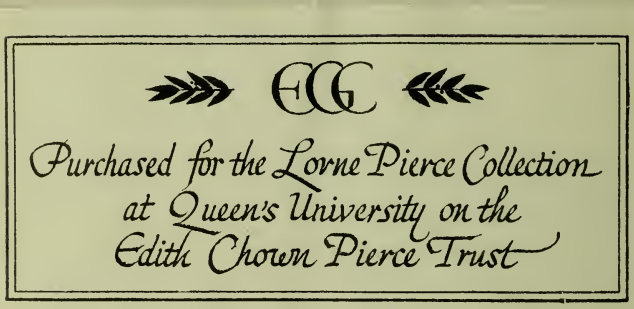

ADDRESS OF REV. W. M. PUNSHON, M.A.

On Wednesday evening, July the 26th, an open session of the Wesleyan Conference was held in the Free Trade Hall, in Manchester, to hear the addresses of the representatives of affiliated Conferences. The hall was filled to overflowing with an eager audience. After the representatives of the Irish and French Conferences had spoken—

The Secretary said that he had now the great pleasure to introduce to the President and to the Conference a beloved brother, who appeared amongst them as the representative of the Canadian Conference—the Rev. William Morley Punshon, M.A.

This announcement was received with great applause, the whole of the immense audience rising and cheering the rev. gentleman.

The President, addressing Mr. Punshon, said: Every heart in this assembly goes with that cheer. We have watched your career in the great and glorious country to which your path has been so mysteriously directed. We rejoice and give thanks to God for the honour which He has put upon you, and the work he has enabled you to do. We see you amongst us again with thankfulness to Him, and with feelings of unspeakable affection and joy towards yourself. We have never lost sight of you; never forgotten you. You have been one of ourselves. Your name has been called over as a member of this Conference every year since you left us. Your name has been called over to-day. I rejoice that it will appear on the records of this year as present in our deliberations, and on your own account I greet you in the name of the Lord, and on account of that noble Church at the head of which it has pleased Him to place you during the last three years.

The Address of the Canadian Conference was then read and accepted; and the Rev. W. Arthur, M.A., Dr. Rigg, and G. S. Rowe were appointed a sub-committee to prepare a reply.

The Rev. Wm. Morley Punshon was, on rising, greeted with much enthusiasm, the whole audience standing and cheering, while some waved hats and handkerchiefs in token of welcome. He said he had, on behalf of the Canadian Conference, to thank the honored fathers and brethren assembled for the

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kindness with which they had received and listened to the filial address which, as the representative of that Conference, he had been permitted to bring to them. He would fain on this occasion represent that Conference worthily, for his constituency was so vast, so intelligent, and so worthy of all possible honour, that they deserved representation of the ablest and of the amplest kind. He was painfully conscious that his task was too heavy for his powers, and bssides this consciousness, which was of itself sufficiently embarrassing, he was still further embarrassed by the circumstances which surrounded him, and by the presence in which he was called upon to speak. He supposed the meeting to be, and indeed it was, a session of Conference, but he had only to look upward and sideward to discover that all the hearts before him did not throb beneath clerical vestments. Now there was a gravity of utterance befitting halls of legislation, and there was a freedom of utterance adapted to popular assemblies, which he was somewhat puzzled to know how to combine. The Canadian Conference sent to England last year a well-loved and eloquent representative, who discharged his duty, as his constituents thought, well, and, as gratitude existed in Canada, and the Canadians were not afraid to express it, their Conference recently held told him so by formal resolution. One, however, of those unseen kings, kings of the tripod, who sat in judgment upon the sayings and doings of that vast assembly, while acknowledging the geniality and heart of the representative's address, left on record his conviction that the Canadian representation was not overladen with dignity. Now he (Mr. Punshon) was heartily glad to be in such good company, for he was sure to fail in that particular regard. His heart was very full both towards the Conference proper, and towards those other friends among the laity who were as yet extra-Conferential. It beat altogether too warmly to be consistent with the patrician indifference which he supposed the dignity of a representative demanded. Moreover, if there was a spot upon earth where dignity sat ill upon a man, it was when it played of its airs at home.

He would therefore ask them to excuse him if he laid his dignity where the mace of the House of Commons was laid—under the table—and spoke to them simply as a friend to friends. He would ask them, then, to listen for a brief while to words from a friend's lips intended for the ears of friends, and dealing with matters of common interest to all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ. Lest he should forget it hereafter, he might just take the opportunity, as it had been the fashion—not because it had been the fashion, for it was sincerely uttered and

expressed—to express the pleasure with which he saw Dr. James in the Presidental chair of the Conference. He trusted that the year of his Presidency would be a year of very great prosperity. In expecting this he was only judging by his knowledge of the past, considering that the President was endowed with so much of the traditional wisdom of *James*, and of the traditional tenderness of *John*, helped forward by the counsel of the good men at each side of him, and, not least, by the Wiseman, whom the brethren had wisely chosen to be seated by his side. He (Mr. Punshon) must now, in the first place, introduce them to his constituency, with which many people in England were only partly acquainted. Since the 20th of July, when British Columbia became formally confederated, the Dominion of Canada comprised six Provinces, viz., Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, and the newly-created one—thus stretching their vast area across the American continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and comprising a larger extent of territory than the United States of America by about 120,000 square miles. To the happy dwellers on this tight little island this might seem of small account, but over the water, where there was a tendency to value things by size, it was a noticeable fact. Of the six Provinces of the Dominion, two, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, with the islands of Prince Edward and Newfoundland, not yet confederated, were comprised in the Conference of Eastern British America, where there were no fewer than 160 faithful labourers, with some 15,000 members in their fellowship. Of the other Provinces in the Dominion—Manitoba and British Columbia, distant, newly confederated, and thinly populated; Quebec, where the vast majority of the people were Roman Catholics and French Canadians; and Ontario, where the United Empire Loyalists took root and grew, also where English, Scotch, and Irish Protestant settlers generally established themselves—constituted the Canadian Conference which he was now called upon to represent.

The diocese over which he was called upon to preside, for his work was episcopal, if his name was not—was 1,500 miles long by some 200 to 300 miles wide, exclusive of the missionary districts; and it contained within it a population of nearly three millions, or something less than the present population of London. There was something cosmopolitan in the Dominion, both as to its nationality, and as to the creeds of its people. They still took, he was glad to find, a warm interest in the affairs of Irish Methodism, and were prepared gladly to listen to the warm-hearted and eloquent representatives from the

sister isle. Well, the Canadian Conference embraced almost as many preachers of Irish birth as were contained in the entire Irish Conference, and they did not number a third of the whole; besides this they had a large number of earnest and enterprising Irish laymen to whom Canada had furnished a home, and who infused their characteristic energy into Canadian institutions and gladdened the Canadian Church with the warmth and fervour of their religious life. They had also a large number of Irish of another sort, of whom he he could not now speak particularly—except to say that they would gladly ship them back again by a fleet of very early and rapid steamers, that they might cry "Ireland for the Irish" to their own hearts' content, and theirs. The Conference had just listened to and welcomed a French representative, and their hearts were going out in sympathy for the trampled land and suffering people of France. They had in Canada nearly a million souls who were French in feeling, habitude, and language, held down by a superstition whose tyranny enthralled the mind, and watched with a jealous watchfulness which knew no interval of slumber. They had also a large and constantly increasing German population, thrifty, industrious, enterprising, but needing sorely to be instructed in religion—to have life infused into their effete Lutheranism, and restraint put upon their tendencies to lager beer. In addition, there were roaming the plains and threading the forests various tribes of Indians, to the number of about 100,000, fast decaying out of life, and needing much the consolations of the true faith to illuminate their western hour.

Among such a motley population they might expect that there would be found almost every possible variety both of speculative and practical error. They had to mourn over men's indifferentism—that most dangerous and least impressible state, in which men had reasoned themselves into quiescent unbelief. They had among them, as he believed, the most compact, well-organized, earnest, sleepless Popery in the world. They had numbers who, in wilful oblivion of former privileges, had lapsed nto the worst of all paganisms—the paganism of forgotten Christianity. In addition they had in the midst of them heathenism proper, manifesting itself now in cruel and now in eccentric developments. There were those yet among them who, in barbarous ceremonies, indicated their belief in the power of the "medicine man" to save, who sacrificed to the white dog, and held frantic bacchanal of dance and feast around the altar. There were those who had a strange weird belief concerning former existence in inferior shape, leading him to the conviction that Mr. Darwin's theory of the descent of man

had not even the merit of originality—but was an unconscious plagiarism from the Indians of the Pacific coast.

In Canada there were likewise to be found those whom paganism had so thoroughly embruted that they might be brought into degrading comparison with the very beasts of the field—hideous, misshapen creatures in the form of man—abortions of intellectual and moral being; and then, as if all this indigenous paganism were not enough, there was being rapidly imported the Confucianism and ancestor-worship of the Chinaman. Stolid, harmless, taking no heed save of the things of lust and life, with a giant passion for gathering gold, with an equal passion for gambling it away, with no collective worship, with all religious sentiment apparently as dead within them as if both intellect and heart were embalmed. They were coming amongst the Canadians in thousands; these heathen whom God was sending to the Gospel, because the Church was so slow of heart and purse in sending the Gospel to the heathen. Considering the vastness of territory and the multiplicity of races and creeds in the Dominion, he thought it would amply appear to those present that if there was missionary ground anywhere it was in Canada, and that if there was room anywhere for the operations of an earnest Church, with the boundless love of Christ in its creed, and with the life of that love in the hearts of its members, it was in the sphere which he represented that day. Methodism in Canada, one in feeling, doctrine, and aim with their own in England, holding reverently by the same traditions, thrilled by the same primary inspiration of love to Christ, and by the secondary inspiration of many a pious pioneer legend of its own, had bravely girded itself up to this great work of evangelism.

In endeavouring to leaven the land with the pure truth of the Gospel of Christ, Methodism in Canada had certain initial advantages which were greatly helpful to successful labour. He would just mention four of them. There were two kinds of work to be done in Canada. The settler must be followed to the remotest forest which echoed to the stroke of the axe or through which arose the smoke of the clearing; and then the requirements of the age demanded that the flock, however scattered, should be housed and tended with all the shepherd's care. In these circumstances it was no small advantage that the men whom God raised up for the ministry in Canada were men who could do all kinds of work, who combined in themselves the pioneer and the pastoral elements of character. They could both fell the trees and build and furnish the house.

Another advantage was that the stream of emigration,

although it did not come, as in the Western States of the Union, in rapids and cataracts, yet flowed steadily, and many a warm-hearted Cornishman and hardheaded Dalesman from the North found ready to hand, so soon as he landed upon Canadian soil, the same hearty fellowship, the same free, grand ringing out of Gospel tidings to which he had been accustomed to respond at home. He did not know whether they would call it an advantage or no, but, in frankly speaking his own mind, he could not help calling it a great and blessed advantage that Methodism in Canada walked abroad in the sunshine, that she cowered beneath no ancient shadow. She had there taken the position which she ought always to take among the Churches—standing forth in her comeliness as the peer of all, and in her charity the friend of all—too kind to be the enemy, too proud to be the vassal of any, too affluent in spirit and resources to be the poor relation of any. Moreover it was always an advantage to a messenger to be assured beforehand of the adaptation to those to whom he spoke of the message which he was called upon to deliver. Now he believed that Methodism was adapted, above all other spiritual agencies, to the wants of those whom himself and all his brethren endeavoured to rescue and to save. They would not do him the injustice of supposing for a moment that he was insensible to the good work which other Churches were worthily performing. The field was quite ample enough for all sorts of tillage. Their Presbyterian friends had many earnest ministers, a compact Church order, well-ordered Church schemes, and Canada owed much to them for their inculcation of high principles and for their battles for religious freedom; but their spread was largely a matter of physical geography. The Episcopalians had wealth and still lingering prestige, and many earnest workers for the Saviour; but Ritualism, even there, enfeebled their spirituality and divided their ranks, whilst the exclusiveness of many of them hindered their progress, although, like the scolding of Tallyerand's wife, it pleased them and did nobody else any harm. Their friends of the Baptist and Congregational Churches were doing good work in their respective spheres, but their spheres were partial, and as yet they showed no signs of rapid development. So far as they were faithful to the truth and catholic spirit he desired to say God-speed to all those Churches.

Yet, after all his travelling, and experience, he must express the firm conviction that Methodism (and in that generic term he included all sorts of Methodists) had within it an adaptation to the wants of every kind of people wherever found. It suited in the dense forest or in the crowded city; where the

merchant counted his dollars, or where the Indian tracked the deer; in the hiving hum of industry, or in the remotest settlement where but lately the panther prowled, and where the adventurous settler had only just begun to fell the trees which centuries had rooted in the soil. O, there was, after all, something marvellously quickening in the proclamation of the message of mercy, available to the uttermost—available always —available now—which goes straight home to the human heart. As the emigrant carried into that new country not only his personal effects, but also the old burden of sin, and care, and sorrow, they could not wonder that he should listen eagerly to the grateful tidings of a present salvation. As in that emigrant's heart there still throbbed the pulse of home, they could not wonder that he should sing the new song the more readily because it was set to the old music—the music to which his heart beat time in childhood, the music which was the last perhaps upon the lips of his mother as she laid her down for her dreamless rest. Well, with these collateral advantages on the one hand, and on the other hand with the draw backs incident to an almost ceaseless western emigration, and to the fluctuation and spiritual feebleness which were incident to a life of change, how had Methodism prospered? Had she fulfilled her mission? had she in any wise, like the Pilgrim fathers, won the wilderness for God? Somebody had said a little while ago, or at least meant it, that statistics were very dry things, and after all they were at best only an approximate source of information.

The best successes, such as the moulding of public sentiment, the creation of a deep current of true religious feeling, could not be tabulated at all; but some idea of the relative power and importance of Methodism in Canada might perhaps be gathered from a comparison of her now with herself at a former period, or even with the English rate of increase within a similar period of time. Some seventeen years ago the missions of Lower Canada were formally transferred to the care of the Canadian Conference. That was the last epoch, so to speak, in the history of Canadian Methodism. In that period the membership of the Canadian Conference had increased no less than 77 per cent. as compared with 32 per cent. in the British Conference, and this of course did not include those who, like the Irish spoken of by Dr. Scott, had gone to enrich other countries, or those who had got safe to heaven and were beyond the power of mischief or harm. Nor did the figures include a large number who were ranked as Wesleyans in public estimation; who would return themselves as Methodists to the census enu-

merators; who, if they were not Methodists, were unchurched and uncovenanted strangers, but who nevertheless did not meet in class, and were therefore not accredited—class meetings being the test of membership there as here. At the beginning of the same period the number of Canadian ministers was 235, but that number had been more than doubled, as they had now 500 in actual work, besides about 100 who had rested after the burden of a long and laborious day. Gauging progress by church accommodation, they might remember that for a million larger population in London, Methodism was said to have only about 130 places of worship, whereas in Canada they had no fewer than 1160, valued at two millions and a half of dollars, or about £500,000. So thoroughly had Methodism leavened the population that one-tenth of the people in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec—or if Quebec be excluded as including principally French Canadians who were Roman Catholics—one-sixth of the population was under the teaching and influence of the well-loved Methodism of their fathers, and on the lowest computation not a week passed without the dedication of a Methodist church to the hallowed purposes of Gospel testimony.

With regard to education, the common school system of Canada was so impartial and comprehensive that no denominational schools were needed. It was largely the creation of one of their own ministers, the Rev. Dr. Ryerson, to whom God has granted the rare privilege of raising his own monument, *ære perennius*, in his lifetime. Methodism, however, took its proper share in the higher education of the Dominion. The University of Victoria College had, besides 105 students in the Preparatory Grammar School, 86 students in arts, 167 in its affiliated schools of medicine, and 26 in its faculty of law; making altogether 384 students under special Methodist oversight; and many of the graduates were earning degrees, good degrees, in that wider university of life where the competition was of the keenest, and where the battle was not always to the strong. The institution had been financially crippled during the past few years by the withdrawal of the Government grant on which it had mainly depended, at least which had been their principal source of revenue. Now, however, they were appealing to the people for an endowment, and although the response was somewhat tardy, they hoped that the amount needed would be realized in a year or two's time. There was a considerable desire among the young men to establish, what he was sorry they had not, a theological chair, or, at any rate, provision for the systematic theological instruction of students for the ministry. One feature presented by the Canadian young men had very much

impressed him; and, unless his remembrance of the young men on this side of the water had deceived him, it was a matter which some of them might not unprofitably ponder. The young men called to the ministry in Canada were most anxious to be truly furnished for their work, and of late years there had been instances—and it was only in succession to what had happened in previous years—of young men who, after the completion of their probation, had requested the Conference to allow their ordination to be deferred until they got a three years' course at college. Had there been in England any examples of that sort to point out? If his memory served him right, the young men here were generally anxious to graduate in another sort of college at that particular time. The young men of Canada, had, however, been taught differently. They had read and mastered that mystical parable in Judges i., where Caleb promised his daughter only to the man who should take the city of Kirjath-seper, which, being interpreted, meant the City of the Books. From this they had fairly induced the very substantial corollary that with all their minds they must become acquainted with truth before with all their hearts they became allied to beauty. While the young men of the country were thus regarded, those who were to be the wives and mothers of the future were by no means forgotten. For them there was a flourishing Wesleyan College with 237 fair students enrolled. The course of instruction was extensive, solid, and, so far as he had had any opportunity of judging, thorough. In the closing exercises which he was privileged to attend, the night before he left for England, there were essays read displaying a penetration and breadth of view along with a combination of apt and happy words which would have done no discredit to places of much higher pretensions. Since 1859 sixty-five of these students had graduated, fifty-three of them in the degree of Mistress of English Literature, and twelve, who had taken a classical course, in the degree of Mistress of the liberal Arts. It perhaps sounded strangely in English ears to talk of ladies who had obtained such diplomas, but they knew that English education was progressing very rapidly in that matter. Now that ladies legislated in the English school boards, lectured on political economy, and practised medicine, it was only one step further, he thought, to realize Tennyson's idea of a college with "prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans, and sweet girl graduates with their golden hair." He had closely watched some of the fair graduates in question, and he was bound to testify that he did not observe them to be less feminine or sensitive than others. Their scholarship had not robbed them of the nameless delicacy and healing tender-

ness which were the charms of womanhood. While their intellects had thus been highly cultivated, he was thankful to say that the moral discipline had been earnestly and prayerfully maintained, that the results in fact had been above all praise, except praise to Him who had brought so many out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel.

Well, then, the Sunday-schools of Canada—for he wanted to get over the ground rapidly—as well as those throughout the whole American Continent, were a vast power for good, and were managed with remarkable completeness. They had there realized the true idea of Sunday-schools—the bringing of every child in the congregation under pastoral care first, and then under the Christian instruction of the Sunday-school. There all the choicest families in the Church were always represented in the Sabbath-school, first as scholars and then afterwards as teachers in their turn, while from these as from a centre mission schools were undertaken in quarters where they were very sorely needed. There was no part of Church work in Canada, as, indeed, throughout the whole Continent of America, which received such earnest, and, he had almost said, scientific attention. The Church gave its best culture and its highest life to train the young for Christ. While thus and otherwise endeavouring to go with its direct ministry of the truth into the midst of the common educational agencies, Methodism in Canada was trying to do something towards the creation of a pure literature and a healthy taste for it.

The Book-room in Toronto was a very flourishing establishment, and it was highly satisfactory to read the report of its year's doings, which he had in his hands, and which, by the way, was printed and distributed to every member of the Conference at the time when the book affairs were under consideration. The *Christian Guardian*, the ably edited organ of the Conference, found its way weekly to 25,000 readers; and although the original works issued from the Book-room were select rather than numerous, yet he believed that number to be about as many as had gone out this year from City-road, and it was a fact that the best works of English literature were eagerly purchased and eagerly read. The theological and ethical works of the best English writers were standards in many a Christian library in Canada, to say nothing of the continued appreciation of those religious biographies which so well kept the flame of divine love alive in the heart. In many a remote Canadian home, where they would hardly think civilization had gone at all, were worthy Christians whose emotions had been powerfully stirred up over the persecutions of William

Shrewsbury, and who prayed right heartily that there might descend on them the mantle of Thomas Collins. The great work for which a magnificent demonstration was to be held in that hall the following night was not forgotten amongst those from whom he came.

The Conference in Canada committed itself heartily to the temperance reformation. The ministers, by their precept and example, were continually endeavouring to drive that accursed foe of intemperance out of the land. There was one part of Canadian legislation which did not seem to them to be inconsistent with civil liberty; and it was this. It stood upon the Statute-book—although whether it was obsolete in practice or no it was not for him to say—that if a man, to use plain Saxon language, was made drunk, could be proved to have been made drunk in a public-house, and on his way homeward fell and broke his leg and mortification ensued from the wound and he died, then the widow could recover damages from the public-house landlord who made him drunk. Now he did not mind if they carried out that sort of permissive legislation if they liked.

He could not say much just now about the question of Union. Methodist Union, there could be no doubt, was a very desirable thing if it could be accomplished without any sacrifice of principle, and with every sacrifice of prejudice and crotchet. Let there but be the maintenance of principles which had always been held to be fundamental, and then he did not know that any Church could be quite guiltless if it did not endeavour to make everything else bend to the realization of that which, because the Saviour prayed for it, must surely be a possible thing, —viz., "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." If the pulse of Methodism at home still beat as it used to do, he was sure that the missionary aspect of the work in Canada would be regarded with special interest. So vast were the needs and so ample the opportunities in Canada itself that these claimed, and justly claimed, the first attention. The settler must be followed; Methodism dare not be faithless to its original commission in that matter. Wherever the settler went the Methodist preacher went, bearing in his hand the open Bible, while from his lips was uttered the simple proclamation of the truth as it was in Jesus. Such was the demand, the urgent demand, for additional labourers, that although forty-two young men were admitted on trial as students for the ministry, and although five ministers from other Churches had cast in their lot with them, yet when the stations were gone over there were twenty needy

applications which could not be supplied. There was great room in Canada for earnest, godly labourers. The Canadians did not want the men whom the English brethren rejected as incompetent, for the base-level of intelligence there was a higher level than was found here at home—no question about that; it was about as much higher as the loftiness of culture was lower. If, however, there were men to be found anywhere whose love to Christ was true, who had a passionate yearning to save souls, who had unbending principle and flexible prejudices, who were docile enough to submit to a superintendent, and yet prudent enough to be trusted without him—men who could in fact be enterprising, sound, loyal, patient, all-round Methodist preachers, then such men could find a sphere in Canada, with ample room for them to move about without jostling their next-door neighbour; and they could moreover find opportunities for gaining a good degree among their brethren, as well as an abundant entrance by-and-bye into the kingdom of heaven. The missions among the German population and among the French population had suffered from the difficulty of finding suitable labourers. They were more hopeful, however, just now than they had been for some years past. He would just like to say that especially among the French population it was impossible to chronicle or tabulate exactly the successes that were attained by any evangelical agency, because in the provinces of Lower Canada, as soon as any were converted a nameless fretting persecution set in—something on which others could not lay their hands, but something that was nevertheless tangible enough to the poor fellow who had to feel it. This resulted pretty generally in the exile of the so-called heretic from the land and from the home of his fathers.

On the Indian work in Canada he need scarcely speak at large, except to say that it needed to be very wisely managed. From the inherent difficulties of the work itself it needed a wisdom and sagacity that could only come, as he was going to say, by something like direct inspiration from on high. Three representative Christian Indians had at different times told their story in England, Peter Jones died in the faith, and had left a fragrant memory. Another, as some of them might remember, did not bear his visit to England so well. The third, the venerable John Sunday, yet lived and worked a little, although in "age and feebleness extreme." He had lost none of his love to Christ, he had lost none of his affectionate interest in the Methodism of England. Hearing that he (Mr. Punshon) was coming to England, John entrusted him with a letter

to the Conference, which perhaps the President would kindly allow him now to read.

The PRESIDENT: Certainly.

The Rev. Mr. PUNSHON then read the letter, which excited great interest. The speaker resumed: The missions to the Red River had had to go through a year of trouble and peril. Nearly one-third of the Indians had been swept off by the small-pox, and although the missionary's family had not altogether escaped, the missionary had been sustained by indomitable faith, and rejoiced in the fidelity of the native converts and in their triumph in danger and death. There were many difficulties, as they might imagine, in the way of the conversion of the Indians. The Indian was once monarch of the plains, and he could not be expected to cherish a very friendly feeling towards those who had superseded him. He was fast fading away, and being helped to his decay by the worst white man's habits, he could not be expected to be very friendly towards those by whom he had been corrupted and ruined. Besides, there were among the Indians many dissensions—some of them hereditary—which were mischievously fostered by the advocates of a cunning policy of extermination. Between the two opposing parties the missionary could scarcely escape blame or injury. The Indian preferred the life of Nimrod the hunter to that of Noah the vine-dresser, and lately the buffalo had seemingly almost vanished from the prairies, and many of them connected this threatened famine with the presence of the missionaries in their midst. Thus the missionaries had to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves, which reminded him that a colored preacher said, in commenting upon that passage, that they must take care to mix the ingredients right—say in the proportion of one pound of the dove to an ounce of the serpent. The missions in British Columbia, which he had recently been privileged to visit, were established some sixteen years ago. They were started by the Canadian Conference, sustained by the moral support and by the financial support—only by a little of the latter, however—of the Conference at home. The first batch of missionaries was headed by the Rev. Dr. Evans, ex-co-delegate of the Canadian Conference, of whom such respectful mention was made in last year's address, and who was worthy of all that they could say in his favour, for as a Western presiding elder remarked of the late Dr. Newton, "He is a happily put up man." He (Mr. Punshon) had been privileged in connection with the Indian work—the needs of which specially impressed him—to ordain a minister for that special part of the work, the first Methodist ordination, but not the last, he hoped,

by hundreds, in that part of the Pacific Coast which was under the British flag. The man he ordained was a noble specimen of what God could make of a Yorkshireman when He had a work for him to do, and for its sake was willing to sacrifice love of home and ease and kindred. That devoted labourer had become eloquent in a native tongue, and without any native advantage of position he could gain an influence over those far-off pagans which the most ambitious statesmen might envy. He (Mr. Punshon) had again and again gone with him into the Indian encampments and seen how their stolid indifference yielded to his appeals; how from the dull red eye there shot as he spoke to them a momentary sparkle of light. He had seen that missionary reprove an old chief—a very proud, solemn, and dirty one—for neglect of worship and for working on the Lord's day, and so great was the influence of the reprover that the reproved, chief though he was, and pagan to boot, whimpered like a whipped child, and spent about ten minutes in making an apology. It was no small advantage to have a man who had so many human conditions of success and who had so abundantly received the signal blessing of the Lord. There were many great difficulties to be overcome in respect to language. There were 40,000 Indians, it was supposed, scattered throughout that country, and they could not be got at. The missionary spoke a language spoken by about 3,500 of them, and then the Hudson's Bay Company had invented a sort of language which they called Chinook, by which they were enabled to communicate with the natives for the purposes of trade, and this gave them access to many more. It was necessary, however, to be very cautious in the use of Chinook, as it was a very imperfect and unready vehicle for language of any sort. For instance a lady sent an Indian servant for two loaves of bread, speaking in Chinook. It was a long time before the servant returned, and when he did he was seen toiling up the hill with a wheelbarrow on which were two sacks of flour! The faulty Chinook had thus certainly conveyed truth, but it had conveyed it in the raw. It was a current story with reference to a certain Episcopal dignitary that he once condescended to address the Indians through an interpreter in Chinook. He began his address in a way which would at once suggest itself to any man with a little sentiment and poetically inclined. He said: "Children of the forest," which was a slightly poetical and rather flattering mode of address, but one could fancy the grimaces that came over the dusky countenances of the Indians to whom he spoke when the interpreter translated the words, "Little men among big sticks," being the only available Chinook for the expression. He men-

tioned this just in order to let the present audience see that it was not easy work with the means at hand to overcome the difficulties that were inevitable in missionary endeavours to gain effectual access to the Indian mind and heart. And yet it was true, for he had seen it, that while they could not lecture these men into thrift and industry, and while their endeavours to impress them with the superiority of civilized life would be met with a grunt of indifference or with the puff of smoke which was so fair an excuse for silence, they were not insensible to the power of the Gospel of Christ. A missionary had only to plant the cross in the midst of them, and under the shadow of that blessed cross all that was embruted and unworthy would die, and all that was of good report and lovely would begin to spring up and ripen. On the sole ground of the civilising influence of Christian missions he would like to set any sceptics down upon Nanaimo, a beautiful settlement on the eastern shores of Vancouver Island, where, if they liked, they could see the two systems growing side by side. There were two streets in that Indian village not much more than 100 yards from each other; called respectively the Heathen and the Christian street. The first presented, close to the river, a long row of low log huts, without windows, without chimneys, with a common door, and earthen floors, with boards loosely nailed here and there, but nowhere forming a complete enclosure, and within these eight or ten families herded together, without decency, without convenience, unkempt, unclad save with blankets, unwashed, and altogether presenting as degrading a downfall from the image of God as could be found on this side of hell. In the Christian street, on the other hand, there was cleanliness and comfort; there was the institution of the family apart—there was thrift, there was a measure of industry, and there was the idea and the look of home. There the two systems were side to side, for all the world to look upon. In the lower street were fathers, brethren, and relatives of those in the higher street, and, as the Gospel reached one heart after another, a small emigration was constantly going on. Oh, if any of the educationmongers who lauded their own agencies so highly, and who sneered at the Gospel of Christ, had only accomplished half an improvement like that, how the great worshippers of the Pan of human sufficiency would have held high festival, and there would have been garlands and incense, and they would have heard the clang of cymbals and the shout of unlooked-for triumph over the length and breadth of the land! But it was reserved for Christianity to achieve triumphs like these, showing in the highest and most complete sense that godliness was pro-

fitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come.

He thought that enough had now been said to show the nature and extent of the work that Methodism was doing in Canada, and that, if it was only faithful to its mission, its future would inseparably be bound up with the future of the Dominion itself. What that future might be it was not for him to predict. Wisely managed, however, blessed with the moral support of this great country, with an energy prepared to grasp great opportunities, with a patriotism which would forbid all purely selfish aims among her sons, there was an empire in the young Dominion's loins. Whether or not that promise of her future would ever be realized depended largely upon her own action, but he was bound to say that it largely depended also upon the treatment which she received from home. He was not there to talk politics, and that was not the place for that, if he were so disposed. He would only say, therefore, that if the English thought it worth while to retain Canada as a comely appanage to the British crown, then her loyalty should neither be suspected nor rebuffed. She should not be told so often that Britain had not the slightest wishto retain her a moment longer than she was wishful to stay, because telling her that only suggested thoughts of going which would never otherwise have entered her head, and provoked the still more irritating thought that Old England wanted to get rid of her. When a Fenian invasion had been put down by God's blessing upon the prompt valour of her own volunteers, she ought not to be subjected to the mortification of hearing the national representatives of Britain eager to express thanks to other parties, as if they had done the deed—parties by whose connivance or consent the conspirators were allowed to arm, drill, march, organize and start upon their miserable enterprize, and who never interposed until the whole thing proved a *fiasco* and a failure. Neither ought Canada to be made to feel, when England got into difficulties, that England was anxious or willing to sacrifice her interests, with very little exercise of self-denial, in order to propitiate that political Ahab, who, although his possessions were already unwieldly, often cast a very loving and longing look towards the acquisition of Naboth's vineyard. This he ventured to say, not as a Canadian, but as an Englishman in Canada, and withal cherishing a most sincere and hearty admiration of many things and people in the United States, also with an intense love for that inner America which did not often come to the surface, but which he had been privileged to see. He did, however, want truth, and comfort, and peace, and prosperity, and confidence all round

And now, in conclusion, he begged, on behalf of the Canadian Conference, to offer on the present occasion the very hearty and filial salutations of that Conference to the great body now assembled. They joyed in the triumphs of their British brethren; they sympathised with their sorrows and trials: and their fervent prayer was that the God of their fathers might give to them the increase of the hundred-fold, and in the world to come everlasting life. To these prayers and greetings, offered in the representative character, he might be permitted to add his own. He did not come among them as one that was quite a stranger. His heart was very full when he spoke to them. Some of them might imagine, although none of them could thoroughly realize, the tumultuous rush of feeling which surged in his soul to-night, sternly repressed by the needs of his position. This was the third Manchester Conference that he had been privileged to attend; Manchester Conferences were eras in his ministerial history. Twenty-two years ago he stood in the gallery of Oldham street Chapel a candidate for ordination, raw, inexperienced, girding on an armor which he had very slightly proved. Twelve years ago he rose from the platform of Oldham-street Chapel to acknowledge his election to the legal hundred—an honour never before conferred on one so young. He stood then before them after a year of deep sorrow, and after a year of extensive travel and labour to testify to the goodness of God and to offer his gratitude to them who had placed such a trust in his hands. Twelve years more had passed away, and now, after a year of more extensive travel and of deeper sorrow, he stood before them as representative to the Church at home from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, and President of the Canadian Conference. Was it not natural that he should feel? He had been asking himself, as he sat in that vast and beautiful hall, what harvest he had gathered from these bygone years; and though memory was keen in her accusations of unfaithfulness, he knew that he had garnered somewhat for which he was now very grateful. He had firmer faith than ever in the goodness of Almighty God, because of the way in which he had led him in the wilderness. He had a firmer faith in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, because he had seen its adaptation in every variety of circumstance and upon every variety of character and colour. He had a firmer faith in the resurrection of eternal life, because in the mysterious providence of God he had been linked to each hemisphere by the dead. Might he add to all this that he had a firmer faith in the unexhausted mission of Methodism, because he had, through all his wanderings, seen its adaptation to the

wants of all people, and knew that the blessing of the Lord abode with its testimony still. Let not the fathers or brethren or dear Methodist people in England be disheartened. Let them not be disheartened by any kind of apparent check to their progress. The glory had not departed from Israel. Let them go forth, as Mr. Cook told them—and a glorious illustration it was—with the red cross upon their arms, with the red cross upon the frontlet, with the spiritual ambulance which they were bearing to the rescue of the wounded and weary, and then they need not and could not fail. The other day, as he was essaying for the first time a voyage on the Pacific Ocean, he could not but be cheered and encouraged by a sign which God in his good providence gave him. As their vessel was steaming out of San Francisco, and through the Golden Gate, God stretched a glorious rainbow from headland to headland, across the mile-wide channel, and under that arch of the covenant the voyagers passed out over the untried and dangerous sea. Oh was there not such a sign for all of them? They had entered upon another year—perhaps one of encouragement or triumph, perhaps one of trial. They talked about the decrease in their numbers, and that was perhaps a partial cloud, but did they not know that it required a cloud to show the rainbow? Could they see the brilliant arch in such relief if it were not for the cloud on which it rested? Let not dear brethren be disheartened. Let them to their knees and to their ranks. Such was once an inspiriting watchword, and they might well repeat it. Let them pray and put forth the effort, and the promised fulness of blessing was theirs. Faith in that promise was an important duty. Without it vain would be their seemly observances and propriety of outward conduct, vain their solemn litany and loud hosannas! Let them have faith, and their lives would be lightning for if there lives were not lightning, it did not matter that their words were thunder. Let them have faith, and by its loving gentleness it would make them still more abundantly active, and useful, and great. Let them have faith, and men should be converted, and the world should fall enfeebled at their feet, and the proud waters should retire abashed before the Lord's Israel, and the fire, forgetful of its fury, should be but a bright slave to light them on their pathway home. Oh, if there could but rise the prayer, as the sound of many waters, from all the sacramental host, "Lord increase our faith," he could ask for them no higher gift than that, and as it went up to heaven the Father would condescend to give the blessing, and in answer would say, as He stooped towards them, "Great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt," and let all the people say, "Amen."